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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS
NSC FOR MGA VIN, LETIM
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ASEC](#) [SU](#) [CD](#)
SUBJECT: CHADIAN REBELS TEST-FIRE NEWLY RECEIVED HEAVY WEAPONS
OUTSIDE MELLIT

REF: 10 KHARTOUM 73; 10 NDJAMENA 35; 10 NDJAMENA 29

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Chadian rebels test-fired newly received heavy weapons outside the area of Mellit on January 22, according to both UN and rebel sources. No details have emerged where the weapons came from. The incident comes less than two weeks after Chad and Sudan signed agreements to end all support for armed rebel groups in their territories. The security situation in Mellit is otherwise reported to be calm. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) On January 22, UNAMID reported that at approximately 10:15am, there was heavy firing of weapons west of Mellit (approximately 65 kilometers north of El Fasher). A UNAMID patrol team seeking to investigate interacted with a local GOS military commander, who told the patrol that the Chadian rebels had received new heavy weapons and had been granted permission by the GOS to test-fire them outside of Mellit. It remains unclear where the weapons came from, though one UN Officer told poloff that he believed they were provided by the GOS. "In my opinion, that's the only way they could have got them," he said.

¶3. (SBU) SLA/AW Commander Suleiman Marajan, who maintains a presence north of Mellit, told emboff that Chadian rebels had been test-firing heavy weaponry northwest of Mellit for several days beginning on January 20, terrifying local villagers in the process. He alleged that the weapons included 106mm mortars and 107mm multi-barrel rocket launchers, which he claimed were supplied by the GOS. He did not speculate on whether the Chadian rebels would remain in Mellit or where they would use their newly acquired firepower.

¶4. (SBU) UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) Officer told poloff on January 23 that most Chadian rebels have since moved out of Mellit town in a southward direction. Their exact location is unknown, but rumors are circulating that they are heading west towards Northern Kordofan, he said. He further predicted that trouble would follow wherever they go, noting that "anywhere they set foot, they rape, pillage and cause mayhem... I seriously think that any attempt by the GOS to demobilize them would end in a fight."

¶5. (SBU) Comment: How the GOS handles the Chadian rebels in Sudan will test its sincerity and ability to implement January 15 Ndjamena Agreement (reftels), especially following the reported rearmament of the Chadian rebels. A lack of coordination between Khartoum politicians and local elements of the GOS military and security apparatus may be to blame, or possibly the Chadians acquired the weapons from some source other than the GOS. The prospects for disarmament and demobilization of the rebel force are uncertain, however, and one cannot ignore Chad and Sudan's history of past failed agreements.
WHITEHEAD